

# **Delaware Announces Travel-Related Positive Zika Case; Preventing Mosquito Bites is the Best Protection**

**Dover** – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) announced today the state's first Zika case in an adult female. The illness was travel-related and pregnancy is not an issue. Zika is primarily spread by mosquito bite and the individual is not considered infectious. The illness was mild, as expected, and was confirmed by a CDC blood test. To protect privacy, DPH will not be releasing additional details on this individual.

The most common symptoms of Zika virus are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). Symptoms typically begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. It can also be transmitted from a pregnant mother to her baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. It is not yet known how often Zika is transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or around the time of birth. In rare cases, it also may be transmitted sexually from male to female.

The most serious threat linked to Zika is serious birth defects. There have been reports of serious birth defects in infants whose mothers contracted the virus while pregnant. Microcephaly, a condition in which a baby's head is smaller than expected when compared to babies of the same sex and age, and other poor pregnancy outcomes in babies of mothers infected with Zika are now being linked to the virus.

Because there is neither a vaccine nor antiviral medications available to prevent Zika virus infection, DPH joins the CDC in sharing precautions for pregnant women or women who may get pregnant:

- If you are pregnant, postpone travel to the countries where Zika virus transmission is ongoing.
- If your male sexual partner has traveled to, or lives in an area with, active Zika virus transmission, condoms should be used for the duration of the pregnancy. Discuss your male partner's potential exposures and history of Zika-like illness with your doctor.
- If you are trying to become pregnant, talk to your doctor before you travel about your plans to become pregnant and the risk associated with Zika virus.
- If you are pregnant or may become pregnant and must travel to one of these areas, talk to your doctor first and strictly follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during your trip.
- If you are not pregnant, but your male partner lives in or has traveled to a country with Zika, consider using condoms.

"This local Zika case is not a threat to the public's health," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "The most serious issue linked to this disease is birth defects caused when the pregnant woman is exposed to the disease. As a result, DPH is focusing its messaging and awareness on preventing exposure to pregnant women and their partners."

Added DPH Medical Director Dr. Awele Maduka-Ezeh, "The best way for people to protect themselves from Zika or any mosquito-borne illness is to prevent mosquito bites during travel abroad and during Delaware's mosquito season. There are too many mosquito-borne illnesses to take a chance."

Those who recently traveled, or plan to travel, to areas where Zika transmission is ongoing, including, but not limited to, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, U.S. Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama could be at risk for exposure. For the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list of countries, visit: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

**All women who traveled to an area with ongoing Zika virus transmission during pregnancy should be evaluated for Zika virus infection and tested in accordance with CDC latest guidance.**

To report a potential illness or receive further guidance on testing, call the DPH Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 302-744-4990. Today, DPH shared educational materials and tools, including flyers in English and Spanish for posting in medical and social service offices that serve pregnant women. For copies of the flyers and more educational tools, see the below links.

Health care providers should ask all their patients about recent travel. Because of the similar geographic distribution and clinical presentation of Zika, dengue, and chikungunya virus infection, patients with symptoms consistent with Zika virus should also be evaluated for dengue and chikungunya virus infection, in accordance with existing guidelines.

For further information:

- CDC information on Zika: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/>
- Division of Public Health Zika page: <http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/zika.html>
- Flyer for pregnant women in English: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/zikaflyerforpregnantwomen.pdf>
- Flyer for pregnant women in Spanish: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/zikaflyerforpregnantwomensp.pdf>
- DPH special bulletin on Zika: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/dphbulletin1602zika.pdf>
- Zika information in Spanish: [http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/d\\_recomendaciones\\_viajeros\\_virus\\_del\\_zika\\_011516.html](http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/mediosdecomunicacion/comunicados/d_recomendaciones_viajeros_virus_del_zika_011516.html)

*Individuals seeking TTY services should call 7-1-1 or*

*800-232-5460. A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled can use a TTY to type his/her conversation to a relay operator, who then reads the typed conversation to a hearing person at the DPH call center.*

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.